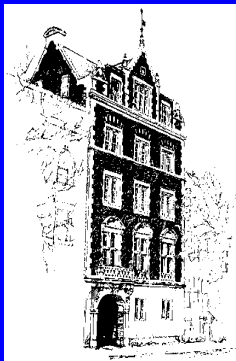


# **Federalism**

## **And the Challenges of Improving Information Systems for Human Services**

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Prepared by the Rockefeller Institute of  
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Information Systems for Human Services “  
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# Purposes of This Discussion Paper

- Present the Information Technology Challenge of the “New Welfare”
- Discuss Information Systems of the “Old Welfare”
- Offer Suggestions for a New Approach to Facilitate Modernization of Information Technology for Human Services

# Technology Challenge of the New Welfare

- ⇒ Programmatic Focus on Work and Self-Sufficiency
- ⇒ Service Approach vs. Income Approach
- ⇒ Tracking Progress and Integrating Services Are Essential to Program Success

This is the Technology Challenge of the New Welfare

# The Roles of Information Technology

- Policy Officials – Monitoring Policy Goals
- Managers – Clearly Stating and Carrying Out Program Objectives
- Evaluators – In Assessing the Effects of Human Services
- Front-Line Workers – In Integrating and Tracking Human Services
- Recipients – In Understanding and Accessing Services

# IT and Service Integration

- A Long-Sought Aim of Program Officials
- The Real Politics of Human Services Make this Difficult
- Bureaucratic Silos All Have Their Own Cultures and Politics
- IT Can Allow Human Services Providers to Leapfrog the Politics of Program Proliferation
- Not “One-Stop” – One Screen



# Technology of the Old Welfare

- Development of Systems Carried Out Unilaterally
- Federal Oversight Varied in Character and Strength
- Funding Processes Differ

# Information Systems Funding and Processes

<b>Program</b>	<b>Federal Agency</b>	<b>Nature of Funding</b>	<b>Funding % for IT</b>	<b>Funding Rules</b>
<b>TANF</b>	<b>DHHS/ACF</b>	<b>Block grants</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Few</b>
<b>Medicaid</b>	<b>DHHS/ HCFA</b>	<b>Entitlement</b>	<b>50, 75 and 90%</b>	<b>APD</b>
<b>Food Stamps</b>	<b>DOAg/FNS</b>	<b>Entitlement</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>APD</b>
<b>Child Care</b>	<b>DHHS/ACF</b>	<b>Block grants</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Few</b>
<b>Child Welfare</b>	<b>DHHS/ACF</b>	<b>Entitlement</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>APD</b>
<b>Child Support</b>	<b>DHHS/ACF</b>	<b>Entitlement</b>	<b>66 %</b>	<b>APD</b>
<b>Employment and Training</b>	<b>DOL/ETA</b>	<b>Formula grants</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Few</b>

# Spending for Human Services IT

- No Comparable Data Across Programs
- Based on Available Data, We Estimate that over **\$20 Billion** Has Been Spent
- Annual Expenditures of **\$7 Billion**
- Yet GAO Reports that Systems Have “Major Limitations”



# Causes of Systems Limitations

- Separate Congressional Committees and Oversight Agencies
- Politics
- Approval Processes
- Staff and Other Resource Constraints
- Business Practices
- Project Management

# Previous Recommendations

- By Organizations such as APHSA, NGA, NASIRE, and GAO
- Recommendations Reflect a Common Theme
- That Federal Agencies Should Change, Improve and Integrate Policies
- Such Recommendations May Have Been Overly Reliant on Federal Action

# A Suggested Approach - A New Strategy

A New Institution, With the Following Roles:

- To Develop, Train and Coach State and Local Project Managers
- To Convene Federal, State and Local Officials to Discuss Ways to Reduce Barriers
- To Showcase Good Practices and Share Information
- To Work With States to Implement Innovative Technologies

# A Suggested Approach – Underlying Premises

- The Entity Should Have Insulation
- It Should Employ Leading-Edge Experts
- It Should Not Be Located in a Single Existing Federal Agency
- It Should Have Buy-In from State Governments
- It Should Not Be Seen as Permanent

# Possible Models Considered

- National Science Foundation
- National Academy of Science
- National Institutes of Health
- Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation
- U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

# Institute for the Management of Human Services Information Systems

- Should Be a Federalism Invention
- Should Be In Washington
- Should Not Have a Conventional Command-and-Control Role
- Should Have a Board, Including:
  - Federal Agency Officials
  - State Officials
  - Local Officials

# Institute for the Management of Human Services Information Systems

Should Have an Advisory Apparatus of Stakeholder Groups, Including:

- Major Associations
- The Vendor Community
- Organizations Interested in the Provision of Human Services
- Program and Technical Experts

# Institute for the Management of Human Services Information Systems

Should Have Multiple Funding Sources:

- Federal Funding in TANF Reauthorization
- Membership Fees
- Charges for Training
- Foundation Support



# Federalism and the Challenges of Improving Information Systems for Human Services

**This paper is intended to promote discussion of ideas for an institution to promote the modernization of Human Services Information Systems.**

**We welcome your comments and suggestions, and will revise the paper based on these discussions.**

